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LINCOLN TO N. J. ROCKWELL.

SPRINGFIELD, Jan. 21, 1846.

MR. N. J. ROCKWELL

Dear Sir:

You, perhaps, know that Gen^l Hardin and I have a contest for the Whig nomination for Congress in this District. He has had a turn; and my argument is that "Turn about is fair play." I shall be pleased if this strikes you as a sufficient argument.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

4. *Letter of John C. Calhoun, 1847.**To the Editor of the American Historical Review:*

The enclosed letter from Mr. Calhoun to Hon. Waddy Thompson of South Carolina may be of interest to some of your readers. While the letter contains perhaps little that is new, it emphasizes in a striking manner the fearless independence of thought and action that renders the character of this eminent man so unique in our history.

LYON G. TYLER.

JOHN C. CALHOUN TO WADDY THOMPSON.¹FORT HILL, 29th Octr 1847.*Dear Sir,*

I have read your letter with attention, and will answer it in the same spirit of candour and freedom, with which it is written.

We do not disagree, as to the cause of the war, nor as to its certain disastrous consequences in the end, let it terminate as it will. We al[s]o agree in the opinion, that the war ought to terminate, and that my position requires me to use my best efforts to bring it to an end. But the great practical question is; How can that be done?

In deciding that question, it must not be overlooked, that both parties by large majorities stand committed by their recorded votes, not only to the war, but that the war is a war of aggression on the part of the Republic of Mexico, aggression by invasion and spilling American blood on American soil, and thus committed also to the Rio Grande being the Western boundary of the state of Texas. It is true, that very few of either party believed, that there was any just cause of war, or that the Rio Grande was the Western boundary of Texas, or that the Republic of Mexico had made war on us by the invasion of our territory, or any other way; but it is equally true, that by an act of unexampled weakness, to use the mildest terms, both stand by admission on record to the very opposite of their belief. And what is

¹ MS. in private possession.

worse, they have by this act of unpar[all]elled weakness, committed large portions of both parties out of Congress to the war, as just and unavoidable on our part.

The effect of all this, with brilliant achievements of our arms, have been greatly to weaken the opposition and to strengthen the party in power, and to make it impossible, in my opinion, to terminate the war in the manner you propose. I go further, to attempt it, would only tend, under circumstances, to weaken those, who make it, and give a new impulse to what is called the vigorous prosecution of the war, instead of bringing it to a termination. I thought so at the last session, and so informed Mr. Berrien and the other Whig members, when he presented his amendment, and such in my opinion has been the effect, and will continue to be its effect, if it should be renewed at the next session. The course I adopted then, or rather suggested, was the only one that had the least prospect of bring[ing] the war to an end. I stood prepared to carry it out, if I had been supported ; and, if I had been, the carnage and expenses of this campaign, would have been avoided. I shall take my seat prepared to do all in my power to bring it to an end, consistently with the state of things, in which I may find the country ; but I fear with as little support, as I had in opposition to the war, or in my attempt to terminate it, at the last session. The fatal error of the Whigs, in voting for the war, has rendered them impotent, as a party, in opposition to it ; and let me add, that while I agree with them in the policy of preserving the peace of the country, as long as it can be consistently with honor, I fear their timidity, as a party, on all questions, including peace and war, is so great, as to render their policy of preserving peace of little avail. It is not only in this instance, that it has disclosed itself. Even on the Oregon question, they gave away, before my arrival at Washington, on Cass's resolution, and rendered it very difficult to re[co]ver what was then lost. To go farther back ; they made but feeble efforts to preserve peace during Jackson and Van Buren's time on the Maine boundary question, and permitted me to stand alone in open opposition to Genl^l Jackson's course, in reference to the French indemnity, backed by the report of the Committee of Foreign relations in the Senate, which, had it not been for the mediation of England, would have ended in War. I rose in my place in the Senate, after the report was read, and exposed and denounced the whole affair, without a voice raised in my support. It is this timidity, when they are right, in questions connected with our foreign relations, and their errors, in reference to those appertaining to our domestick relations, which keeps them out of power, notwithstanding their individual respectability, and prevents them from performing, with effect, the important duties of an opposition. I am sure you will excuse this free expression of my opinion, in relation to a party, with which you rank yourself.

With great respect

I am &c.

J. C. CALHOUN.

HON. W. THOMPSON.